

Amendment to the Specification:

Please replace the existing abstract with the following amended abstract:

ABSTRACT

A playlist generator implements a net-based ~~partitions~~ the playlist generation process ~~into~~ that comprises a multi-stage, hierarchical process. At ~~an example~~ a highest hierarchical level, the playlist generator applies parameters corresponding to a the user's "general" preferences, wherein the parameters are applied. These general preferences reflect the user's "tastes", and are relatively constant. At a lower level of the hierarchy, the playlist generator applies parameters corresponding to the user's "specific" preferences, wherein the parameters are applied. These specific preferences reflect the dynamic time-dependent or event-dependent aspects of a user's ~~entertainment preferences~~. The playlist generator uses the high-level preferences parameters to generate a subset of material from ~~the~~ a global collection of material, and applies the lower-level preferences ~~are applied~~ to this subset of material in response to a change in as the user's immediate preferences change. By segregating the playlist generation process hierarchically, efficiency is gained by applying immediate preference changes to a smaller subset of material, and coherency is improved by limiting the subsequent selection processes to a given subset of the material.